



Once you do away with the idea of people as fixed, static entities, then you see that people can change, and there is hope.

bell hooks  
(b. 1952)  
Professor

It is difficult to argue with the reality of change. Our physical world is constantly in flux – trees grow, water evaporates, our bodies age. Even if something doesn't “change” from one day to another, our attitude about that “sameness” is different – we feel one day's more portion of comfort, anger, relief, or resignation. Change is simply a given.

We can be deliberate in how we act.

We can act with honesty about our assumptions. What we do is often based on what we assume to be obvious; we can be rigorously honest about these beliefs. Self-awareness allows us to examine ideas we hold as ideals, truisms we have accepted as true. We can become conscious of the origins of our behavior; we can grow by being curious when someone's normal varies from ours.

We can act with awareness of consequences others experience. Attention to the common good requires us to look past the immediate personal value of an activity and consider how that action will impact those around us. We can listen to another's story; we can watch for another's pain. We can use empathy as a resource for examining our own decisions and conduct.

We can act more out of faith than out of fear. Accepting the power of fear need not limit our ability to opt for the possibility of faith. We can take a stance that the best in ourselves, and the best in others, will be called forth and can emerge. Even though fear is less complicated than hope, we can still choose hope.

We can act consistent with our moral compass.

*What assumption of mine can I examine? How will my best-self act today?*